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odacı at Atatürk
University and
coffeehouse racon-
teur

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The Importance of Saying "İnşallah"¹

We should become accustomed to saying "İnşallah." If someone asks, "When will you come back?" you should answer, "I shall return at such and such a time--'İnşallah.'" If you do not say "İnşallah," it is quite possible that you will not return at the time you had indicated. As I am always saying, the essence of everything is the love of Allah, and the key to everything is the will of Allah, therefore it is important to say "İnşallah." Similarly, it is important to say "bismillah."² For example, if you sit down at a dinner table, whether you are at home or are a guest in someone else's home, you should say "bismillah" before you touch one morsel of food. We should say

¹"If Allah wills."

²Bismillah (In the name of Allah) is the first part of the expression with which the Koran opens, Bismillahir-rahmanirrahim (In the name of Allah, the Compassionate and Merciful). The full expression is used at the beginning of prayer services. Bismillah is usually uttered at the beginning of any undertaking in order to gain divine approval (or good luck) for the venture.

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"bismillah" before opening a door, before starting to set the table, and before putting food in the dishes. Greater abundance will come to the one who utters "bismillah."

Muşmulalık³ used to catch fish from the sea every day,⁴ but he did not get enough to eat because he had never said "bismillah." When the blessed Noah had asked Muşmulalık to bring wood from the forest for the construction of the Ark, he asked Noah, "If I do so, will you satisfy my hunger?" After Noah agreed to do this, Muşmulalık went to the forest, cut down oak trees, and began to carry them to Noah on his back.

On the way, however, he met Satan, who asked him, "What are you doing?" When Muşmulalık explained the bargain he had made with Noah, Satan said, "How could he ever satisfy your hunger? He has deceived you.

When Muşmulalık heard this, he threw down the timbers he had been carrying and went home. However, there was still enough wood left to build the Ark from the scraps of

³A son of Adam, sometimes called Mucmuluk.

⁴Muşmulalık was so extremely tall that the fish he caught from the sea he cooked by holding them close to the sun. See this legend about him in "Blood Castle," ATON No. 927. It also appears in More Tales Alive in Turkey, by Walker and Uysal, p. 266.

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trees that had gotten caught in his hair and between his toes. When he took those scraps to Noah, that prophet said, "These will be enough for my purpose." He then cooked a bowl of barley in camel's milk and took it to Muşmulalık.

When Muşmulalık looked at the bowl, he asked, "Do you expect to satisfy my hunger with that?"

"Yes, it will satisfy your hunger if you say 'bis-millah' before you start eating it," answered Noah

"I have not said that in my whole life," answered Muşmulalık.

"What is that? What are you talking about?" asked Noah.

"I am telling you that I shall not say 'bismillah, for I have never said 'bismillah' in my entire life."

Noah said, "Very well, then. Go ahead and eat," for, in fact, he had tricked Muşmulalık into saying "bismillah" twice.⁵

⁵This brief commentary on İnşallah is taken from ATON tale No. 1698 and here given independent status lest its narrative element be entirely lost in that much longer tale.